

Gulf Voices

Over the last ten years, fishermen's organizations, community conservation groups and community development associations around the Gulf of Maine region have adopted community-based management as a response to the economic, social and environmental crises that have been brought on by overfishing, privatization, mismanagement and overexploitation of non-renewable resources.

In the late 1990s a group of people working on community-based fisheries around the Gulf of Maine began to exchange ideas and support each other in a variety of ways. For example, a group of fishermen's representatives from Stonington, Maine came up to Digby, Nova Scotia and met with local fishermen. Around the same time, and with very similar missions, the Bay of Fundy Marine Resource Centre at Cornwallis Park, Nova Scotia and the Cobscook Bay Resource Center in Eastport, Maine were established and began to share information and ideas almost immediately. There were the many other meetings and conferences that led to energetic discussions about the principles and practice of community-based management.

From these experiences community leaders came to a number of realizations about the future of community-based organizations in the Gulf of Maine:

- Peer support and exchange was essential for this field to thrive and grow, and there needed to be some way of supporting these exchanges more formally and consistently.
- Resource centers would play a critical role in providing the local organizational, research, educational and capacity-building support for local organizations.
- More funding support was required from a range of grant sources.
- There needed to be some way of supporting new and emerging local organizations.

All these realizations added up to the need for some network that would support and connect organizations working on community-based fisheries management and conservation around the Gulf of Maine. And so, Saltwater Network was launched in 2001 as a kind of "bioregional community foundation," created by and for community-based organizations around the Gulf of Maine to support community-based management and conservation in the bioregion of the Gulf of Maine.



[about the Saltwater Network](#)

* Excerpted from *[Gulf Voices: The Saltwater Network](#)* by Arthur Bull. The Gulf of Maine Times. Vol. 8, No. 3. Winter 2004.

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